



News

**Contact:**

Anne Fitzgerald
800.282.8685 (DE only)
302.698.4520
302.242.4092 (Cell)

Delaware Department of Agriculture
2320 South Dupont Highway, Dover, DE 19901

University of Delaware

College of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Newark, DE 19716

Contact:

Katy O'Connell
302.831.1355
302.632.7315 (Cell)

To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

**For immediate release:**

August 23, 2010

Twilight Tour with Bees

The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) and the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension (UD) are presenting a *Twilight Tour with Bees* from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM on Monday, August 30, 2010, at Lister Acres, 5417 Milford-Harrington Highway, Harrington, Delaware. DDA and UD staff will have tour stops demonstrating the importance of healthy, abundant bee populations to Delaware's fruit and vegetable crops, the diversity of native bees found in the state, and farm management to enhance pollinator conservation. The speakers from DDA include Entomologist Heather Harmon Disque, State Apiarist Bob Mitchell from DDA. Assistant Professor Dr. Debbie Delaney, Extension Entomologist Joanne Whalen, and Vegetable Specialist Gordon Johnson are among the speakers from UD. Funding for the event is provided by a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant.



DE Department of Agriculture entomologist Heather Harmon Disque sampling bees.

The nearly 4,000 species of bees found in the United States are the premier pollinators of fruit and vegetable crops, as well as a wide variety of native plants. Protecting and conserving bees is vital to our food supply and our quality of life. The *Twilight Tour with Bees* is the culminating event in the four-year long SARE grant funded pollinator initiative (*Farming for Native Bees*) undertaken by DDA and UD. From 2006-2010, several thousand native bees were collected from vegetable farms as well as state parks and lands. These bees represent more than 100 species. Of these, 18 were state records, namely bees that had not been collected in the state before. Assessments of bee population diversity, and pollinator conservation farming practices were conducted on 15 farms. The project also produced two publications, "Delaware Native Plants for Native Bees" and "Farm Management for Native Bees", funded by NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). The host of the Twilight Tour, Chuck Hurd, was chosen as the 2008 National Pollinator Conservationist of the Year by the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign. For information on attending the event, contact DDA at: 302-698-4577.

###